

Construction along I-10 to slow traffic

Starting this month, 8-mile stretch's speed limit will be 55 mph

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Drivers will have to slow down through work zones when construction to widen Interstate 10 begins this month.

The speed limit will be reduced from 65 mph to 55 mph during the first phase of construction between Sarival Road and Loop 101.

Crews will add a carpool lane and two regular lanes to the 8-mile bottleneck, for a total of five lanes in each direction.

But how much longer commuters will have to wait in traffic, Arizona Department of Transportation officials don't know.

Plans are in place to divert semitrucks to other routes such as Arizona 85, ADOT transportation manager Mike Bruder said.

"If we can get some of the trucks out of the area, that will help," he said.

Meanwhile, the Arizona Department of Public Safety will increase its patrols to clear stranded motorists or accidents from the roadway and minimize delays, said Brock Barnhart, ADOT community-relations officer.

At a recent Arizona Department of Transportation open house, Southwest Valley residents studied enlarged maps of I-10 plans and chatted with the project's engineers.

Traveling during rush hour on the freeway from her Avondale home is "horrible," said Debby Thacker, 49.

"I try to take the side roads as much as possible."

With ADOT predicting traffic on I-10 will more than

double by 2030, Thacker said she's thankful to know work is beginning finally.

Three more construction phases will widen the road as far west as Arizona 85 and east to Interstate 17.

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